

Minutes of OTS Board meeting 10 December 2015

Present

Teresa Graham (acting chair)
John Whiting
James Bowler
Adam Broke
Edward Troup

In attendance

David Halsey (OTS Head of Office designate)

1. Introduction

David Halsey, who joins the OTS w.e.f. 1 January 2016 was welcomed.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Noted: these have been published on the OTS website

3. OTS constitution

The legislation to put the OTS on a statutory basis was published on 9 December along with the rest of the draft Finance Bill. The Board noted that John Whiting and (latterly) David Halsey had been involved in its development.

The Board reviewed the legislation in detail and agreed that it seemed satisfactory and contained some significant and helpful powers. In practice it would be supplemented by a framework agreement between OTS and HM Treasury. The Board asked that:

- Comments from stakeholders are monitored and that they are alerted about matters of significance
- An initial draft of the updated Framework Agreement is developed for the next Board meeting

4. OTS Chair

The Board noted with pleasure the appointment of Angela Knight as the new Chair of the OTS. This was announced at the same time as the draft legislation. John Whiting confirmed that he would be developing an induction programme for her, which might parallel aspects of David Halsey's (as they would start at the same time).

The Board noted that an early project for the new Chair would be to help develop the OTS strategy, including consideration of the next projects to be undertaken.

5. OTS staffing

With David Halsey's recruitment, and the recent appointments of Angela Brown and Aaron Yamoah, the OTS's staffing position is hugely improved. However, it was noted that we would very soon have to consider post-31 March staffing as all our private sector staff are due to complete their terms then.

6. Letter from the Financial Secretary

The letter from the FST to the OTS which accompanied the Autumn Statement had been circulated (and has been published on the OTS's website). The contents were discussed and the Board agreed that a formal response should be sent.

7. Projects on income tax/NICs closer alignment and Small Company taxation

John Whiting gave an update on progress with the projects. The OTS is engaged on a great deal of evidence gathering and research. We are on target to produce reports at 1 March, but the timetable is very challenging, partly because of delays in getting staff for the office. The Board discussed the direction of the projects and noted the Consultative Committee meetings.

8. OTS finances

The end-November figures for the OTS suggest that we will underspend our budget for the year due to staffing shortfalls earlier in the year.

9. AOB

The Board agreed to meet in early/mid-February to consider emerging recommendations from the current projects.